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PART V

YUNG-NING TERRITORY: ITS HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY

CHAPTER I

History and Boundaries of Yung-ning 永寧

1. The Native Chieftaincy

Unlike the Li-chiang district which has been under direct Chinese control since 1723, when the native prefecture was abolished, and the Na-khi chiefs lost their power and were demoted, the Yung-ning chiefs, relatives of the former Na-khi chiefs of Li-chiang, have retained to this day their semi-independence. They are only nominally under Chinese rule, being subject to the prefectural city of Yung-sheng 永勝 (Yung-pei 永北), 450-li to the south of Yung-ning.

Before the coming of Khublai Khan (Hu-pi-lieh) to Yung-ning in 1253, Hli-dü (Yung-ning) was a wild country. A group of families would live together on a hill top, at feud with similar groups on other hills. Whichever was the stronger lorded it over the rest. This condition is said to have continued even after Khublai Khan had conquered the territory and established his officers to rule it. People went ploughing with bows and arrows fastened to their loins.

There were originally eight Hli-khin (Na-khi) [1] family names, of which five remain to this day. Three have become extinct and forgotten. The ancient Na-khi name of the T'u-ssu (native chief) family was Ngoa. The family names existing to-day are Hsi, Ho, Bbu and Ya. The Li-chiang Na-khi had only two family names, Mu and Ho. The former was the name of the ruling family, the latter that of the peasants. The present family name of the Yung-ning T'u-ssu is A 阿 and is said to have originated in the following manner: During the period of Ming Yung-lo 永樂 (A.D. 1403–1424) one of the ruling Yung-ning chiefs went to the capital in audience. He had inherited his commission to rule from the days of the Mongol dynasty, but had never been appointed by proper Imperial letters patent; these he was anxious to obtain. As he was kneeling before the Imperial presence he was asked his name; not understanding the question, he replied, with folded hands, "A," which in the Hli-khin language is as much as to say "I do not understand." Thereupon the Emperor conferred on him the family name A.

In ancient days, according to the records of its chiefs, Yung-ning territory was considerably larger, and extended to within two stages of Li-hua 麗化 (Li-t'ang 麗塘), in the north, and included nearly all the land now known

[1] The name *Hli-khin* is derived from *Hli:* the name of the Yung-ning plain and *khin:* man or people. The final n is very nasal, as is the foregoing vowel; it is the Na-khi, *khi*. The Ima khin are a clan of the Na-khi, as are the Zhêr-khin.

101 173 [55] [p. 355]